***Celebrating our Good Fortune***

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The Meadows at Topsfield Quarterly Newsletter – Issue #4

July 1, 2019

## COMMUNITY Projects – WHAT’S GOING ON?

***Announcement*: The Board is getting ready to start short and long range “Strategic Planning”. If there are improvements/visions/augmentations to our Community you would like us to consider for future implementation, please let us know and we will see if they are viable options. Cost and majority consensus would be factors for consideration.**

***May Community Meeting***: Our Bi-yearly Community Meeting was held on May 29th. We thank all who could attend. Sandy Guido sent out Minutes for that meeting as well as the PowerPoint Presentation shown at the meeting. If you did not receive or had issues opening them, just reach out to any of us and we’ll make sure you get a copy.

***Strategic Planning Infrastructure/Maintenance:*** For this project the Board plans to reach out to key stakeholders (vendors, contractors, Golf/Frank etc.) to provide opportunities to bring things to our attention that should be on our radar for the short, medium and long-terms.  Once we receive that input, the Board will perform an interactive prioritization exercise.  Once completed, and Board consensus is in place, we will present the strategy plan to the Association at our Fall Community Meeting for review and feedback. Scott has volunteered to facilitate the project.

***Strategic Planning Landscape:*** Schulte Landscape and Sandy have spent considerable time and effort putting together a comprehensive landscape plan for the community. The Board is also considering hiring a landscape architect to help enable this initiative. Three local architects have been identified for the job. Next meeting, the Board will vote on whether to reach out to one of these companies to move the project forward in an organized and effectual manner. The end goal is to provide a cohesive, cost effective plan designed to maximize/augment Association esthetics while being conscientious of cost, ultimately reducing yearly landscape expenses. Once funding costs for the entire plan have been determined, we will proceed to outline a “suggested” phased approach into our upcoming yearly budgets and present the plan to the Association at our Fall Community Meeting for review and feedback.

***Reserve Funding Research – How Much is Reasonable?*** The Board will present our funding recommendation to the Association at our Fall Community Meeting. We are still researching options and Industry Standard recommendations for an Association of our size and makeup (no pool, club houses etc.). Our end goal is to recommend a monetary figure that will protect our investments while keeping monthly HOA costs realistic and reasonable.

***Reserve Funding – Interest Bearing Accounts: W***e have fully funded the TD Reserve account. This account will generate interest at the rate of 1.5%. We have an opportunity to increase this return if we are willing to invest in a Certificate of Deposit and we are open to suggestions including “laddering” of maturities, so we ensure liquidity.

***New Association Banking Information***: Operational funding has been successfully transferred to TD Bank (Topsfield). What should have been a simple task was quite complicated and time consuming.

***Electronic HOA Process***: We are continuing to work through the logistics of how this can be set-up in a way that promotes efficiency while at the same time ensures we have the visibility into account activity to allow for complete and accurate accounting.

***Overflow Parking***: The Board is reminding everyone that Overflow Parking is restricted for Visitor Parking. Although allowed under certain Board approved circumstances for short periods of time such as interior garage construction or the like, continual use will need to be addressed. It’s been reported as a growing issue that residents are having difficulties backing out of garages because of increased street parking due to diminished access to Overflow Parking.

***Septic System:*** Septic tank pumping is scheduled for July 2nd. Work on installation of upgraded filters and replacement of broken covers has been ordered but hasn’t been scheduled yet.

***Website Update***: Su and Lucy Power have a draft ready for review by the Board and will be sharing with the Community at our October Community meeting.

***HOPA State Regulations***: As briefly discussed at our May 29th meeting, as a registered and recognized 55+ community in the State of Massachusetts (The Meadows at Topsfield), it is our responsibility to maintain “55+ age records” for each unit – confirming at least one owner/tenant is 55+. Su will be going unit to unit such that we can obtain objective evidence (license snapshots) that we are compliant with that regulation. Private information will not be published to the community. The Board will maintain those records in the event they need to be presented due to a town or state audit. It is required we refresh this information every two years. Since most of us don’t typically get younger as the years pass us by – future certifications should be easier to obtain.

***Community Continuity Initiative***: Sandy is in the process of researching other 55+ community rules and regulations regarding this subject. A well-documented general policy (which we have but may need augmentation) will provide guidelines on how much discretion individual homeowners have regarding improving exterior property. The intent is to help homeowners determine when they are free to make changes and when they must approach the Board for approval to make changes.

***Insurance Broker Reviews:*** We have started the process of reviewing our Association Insurance Policy and Coverage. The Trustees will revisit with Bob Masse (our current Insurance holder – WTPhelan) later this month. As new Board members it is our responsibility to understand insurance coverages. Therefore, we want to meet with our agent to better understand our coverages and why they are important. Depending on what we hear, we are considering a “second opinion”. We’ll keep you posted and will have more information for you at our Fall Community Meeting.

***Golf Nets – Status update:*** Pat and Richie have met with the installers that replaced our net between buildings 5 and 6 (installed in 2017). A few holes have started to materialize, but fortunately the net is warrantied for 10 years. We are waiting to see what our options are to remedy the situation. In addition, the net behind Units 21 – 24 continues to decay and will need replacement in 2020 pending funding. Tim and Richie continue to repair troubled areas, but it has reached a point that repair is a constant battle.

***Gutters/Trim*:** Tim is in the process of replacing damaged gutters and trim for those of you having issues. If you have not notified Tim and need these items looked at and/or replaced – just let him know and he’ll be happy to swing by.

***Annual/Perennial List:*** Some of you/us are still planting. We have reattached the pre-approved plantings list at the end of this newsletter for planting selections not requiring Board Approval.

***Fall Community Meeting:*** Since some of you leave for warmer climates early in the season – We’ll be targeting early to mid-October for that meeting.

***Community Reminder and Well Wishes:* With the 4th of July just days away, we want to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and safe Holiday. With fireworks and gas grill calamities bubbling up on the news recently, we want to remind our neighbors and friends to play it safe rather than sorry**.

***As always, suggestions and feedback are welcome***. Pat, Sandy, Scott, Su and Tim

## **Financials - Scott**

***Year-To-Date OPERATING ACCOUNT***:

Beginning Balance: January 1, 2019: $1,231.26

Deposits/Income: $68,040.00

Prepayments: $3,880.00

     Assessments: $0.00

Payments/Expenses: $53,264.66

Transfer to Reserve Account: $0.00

Ending Balance: **June 30, 2019:** $19,886.00

***YEAR-TO-DATE RESERVE ACCOUNT:***

Beginning Balance: **January 1, 2019:** $48,868.08

Deposit into Reserve Account: $100.00

Ending Balance: **June 30, 2019:** $48,968.08

Reserve Funding will take place at the end of the Fiscal Year in order for the Trustees to closely monitor expenses/costs. Currently HOA expenditures are on track and we are trending according to Budget.



Pre-Approved plantings. I.E. No additional approvals required.

Spring/Summer

* Bachelor Buttons
* Balsam
* Celosia or Cocks Comb
* Coleus
* Petunias
* Lantana
* Lobelia
* Geraniums
* Marigolds
* Moss Rose i.e. Portulaca
* Nasturtium
* Snapdragons
* Petunias
* Pansies/Violets
* Strawflower
* Stock
* Sweet Alyssum
* Zinnia

Late Summer/Fall

* Chrysanthemums
* Flowering Kale
* Salvia

Suggested Perennials

* Artemisia
* Bulbs such as Lilies, Tulips, Daffodils, Hyacinths
* Carnations
* Creeping Thyme
* Periwinkle/Myrtle
* Dianthus Pinks
* Hosta
* Pachysandra
* Phlox
* Sweet Williams
* Seedum